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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S JENDAYI FRAZER, AF/SPG, SE NATSIOS,
S/CRS, D
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MARR](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: FIRST TRANCHE OF CHINESE ENGINEERS WAITING FOR
MATERIALS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1735

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1866

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Chinese Defense Attache Dong Jian Dong told poloff December 3 that 140 Chinese engineers arrived at the Nyala Forward Operating Base (FOB) on November 24, but have not yet started construction of the initial part of the UN-African Union Mission In Darfur (UNAMID) supercamp. Dong said that engineer's heavy construction equipment left Khartoum several days ago, but has not arrived in Nyala. For two days, the equipment has been at the Darfur border, waiting for African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) troops to escort the equipment to Nyala, he said. Dong said the wait is a prudent measure given the number of car-jackings and the importance of the heavy equipment. He said construction of the supercamp is now delayed by at least a month.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The 140 engineers came with their own tents for housing, but the rest of the materials for the main body of the Chinese engineers is coming by sea and has yet to arrive, said Dong, who blamed the inadequate port facilities at Port Sudan for the delay. "The port is very busy, it takes two to three weeks to unload materials, and then it takes time to transport the materials to Nyala. The UN needs to talk to the port authority to get UNAMID materials given a higher priority for off loading." Chinese Ambassador confirmed to CDA Fernandez on December 2 that the inefficiency of the port was a major bottleneck, "it is very slow and very far from Darfur in the best circumstances."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Asked about potential obstacles to construction, Dong said that logistics, funding and insufficient UNAMID operational control all represent obstacles. In terms of logistics, he said the road between Port Sudan and Khartoum is suitable only for lighter vehicles and not for heavy cargo. Some of the roads from Khartoum to Nyala have sections which have severe dips in the road for passage of flood waters, which slows down the transit of heavy transports creating further delays (floods during the rainy season in Kordofan actually made the road impassable for several weeks earlier this year). A second obstacle, Dong said, is that UNAMID has no funds with which to purchase materials. He said there are not enough construction materials in Darfur, so UNAMID must buy supplies and materials now and transport them to Nyala.

[1](#)4. (C) Dong said a third obstacle to construction is UNAMID's

current lack of operational control (by this he meant which forces are deployed where). Dong said Rwanda had deployed its part of the Heavy Support Package (through the USAF) and represents "an excellent fighting force." Dong said he would like to see the Rwandans protecting his Chinese engineers, rather than the Nigerians. However, as this force is still under AMIS command, UNAMID is unable direct the change in mission. "Without funds and operational authority, UNAMID is a force in name only."

15. (C) Comment: Dong's concern about UNAMID's lack of operational control is no doubt more related to Chinese force protection than to UNAMID construction. While Dong gave high marks to the current AMIS-UNAMID high level commanders, he appeared frustrated by the lack of organization at other levels, especially as that translates into force protection. Given the recent threats against the Chinese engineering company (Ref B), the Chinese Embassy is justifiably concerned about quality of their force protection.
FERNANDEZ